Part 2

Implementation Status of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate
(Summary)
Further enhancement of child care support measures

1 Smooth implementation of the children and childrearing system

Qualitative and quantitative improvement in child education, nursing and childrearing according to regional situations

The Comprehensive Support System for Children and Childrearing (hereinafter referred to as “new system”) based on the Act on Children and Childrearing Support (Act No. 65 of 2012) was fully implemented in April 2015. Under the basic recognition that “parents have a primary responsibility for childrearing,” the new system promotes comprehensively school education and childcare in early childhood as well as local child and childcare support. (Fig. 2-1-1) Specifically, the new system will focus on the creation of common benefits to (1) centers for early childhood education and care, kindergartens and nursery centers (“facility type benefits”), and of benefits to small-sized nursing care (“community-type childcare benefits”), (2) the improvement of the system of centers for early childhood education and care, and (3) the enhancement of child and childcare support according to local circumstances.

Fig. 2-1-1 Outline of the Comprehensive Support System for Children and Childcare Support (April 2016)
The implementing entity is municipalities as the basic administrative entity and will implement school education and childcare in early childhood as well as provision of benefits required for local child and childcare support according to the actual circumstances of each area. In the wake of the increase in the target number of centers for childcare from 400,000 to 500,000 children by the end of FY 2017 based on the “Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children” in November 2015, in addition to the creation of the program aimed to provide subsidy and support to establishers of facilities for employer-provided childcare services (Company-led childcare business program), the Act on Children and Childrearing Support was revised including raising of the upper limit of the contribution rate collected from ordinary industrial corporations in the ordinary sessions of the Diet in 2016 (190th Diet). Through the Company-led childcare business program started in April 2016, the development of further centers for childcare is underway.

**Improvement of various childcare supports according to regional needs**

- **User support**
  In addition to providing support such as consultation, information provision, advice etc. in near-by places so that childrearing families and pregnant women are encouraged to make use of education/childcare facilities and institutions related to regional child and childcare support programs, health, medical care, welfare and the like, we will develop systems for communication, adjustment, coordination and cooperation with related institutions. Also, a “user support service project” that makes coordination with relevant organizations, creates collaboration and structures for collaboration among others, was established in accordance with the enforcement of “New child and childrearing support system” As well as establishing a system of coordination and collaboration, coordinating communication with related organizations. This project has mainly two functions of “user support” in which individual needs of childrearing households are grasped in order to collect and provide information, provide consultations and provide assistance and support for the use of education/childcare facilities and region child and childcare support programs and of “regional collaboration” in which systems for communication, adjustment, coordination and cooperation with institutions related to child care support are created to foster regional childcare support resources, discover and share regional problems and develop social resources required for the region. This project is divided into three types: the “basic type” that implements both functions; the “specific type” that implements only “user support” to provide information on childcare centers and a variety of childcare services and provide assistance to users for their use; and the “maternal and child health type” in which professionals such as public health nurses perform both the “user support” and “regional collaboration” for all maternal women in order to provide support to a variety of needs from pregnancy to childrearing. In FY 2016, this project has been implemented in 471 places with the basic type, 341 places with the specific type and 633 places with maternal and child health type (subject to national treasury subsidy). (Fig. 2-1-2)
Section 1  Further enhancement of child care support measures

Fig. 2-1-2  Support project for users

- Regional childcare support centers
  In order to reduce feelings of burden and feelings of anxiety of childrearing families, we implement the “Regional childcare support center program” which provides opportunities for childrearing parents for casual meeting and exchange, provides consultation and assistance on childrearing as well as information related to regional childrearing, and provide seminars on childrearing and childrearing support.
  This program was implemented in FY 2016 in 7,063 places (subject to national treasury subsidy).

- Temporary nursing and education by kindergartens
  The temporary nursing project has been conducted to meet the demand for temporary nursing in response to various work arrangement and the urgent requests from non-working mothers.
  (Number of locations of general type service implementation in FY 2016: 9,042 locations)
  The subsidies have been provided for kindergartens, which carry out “temporary nursing” before or after the ordinary education hours (standard four hours) or during long holidays, in response to people who desire or regional situations.

Since demands for “after-hours childcare” are increasing due to diversified needs of parents following the expansion of women’s social participation in recent years, urbanization, nuclear familiarization etc., the government revised “National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens” in 2008 to provide appropriate education activities. Furthermore, in order to promote the kindergartens’ acceptance of wait-listed children, we have been enhancing subsidies relating to day care service and the alike for longer time periods and/or during parents’ long-term leave in FY 2016 to 2017, and in FY 2018 budget, further measures such as establishing a system to periodically accept 2-year-olds who need child care at the kindergartens, based on the “Child rearing Relief Plan” were taken.

- Family Support Center
  The government is promoting the installation of family support centers with enrollment of workers and housewives with infants and elementary school children as their members to provide mutual aid and cooperation activities such as transfer and after school custody.
  (In FY 2016, 833 centers were installed). In addition, as from FY 2009, services such as custody of sick and convalescent infants and

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1 As of FY 2016, about 85% of kindergartens implement such childrearing support activities.
emergency custody in early morning and late night have been implemented (In FY 2016, 145 services were installed).
Incidentally, as of the end of FY 2016, the number of the members of the family support center program who need support is 550,000 and who provide support is 130,000.

Provision of a Variety of Childcare Services
In order to satisfy a variety of childcare needs, we continue to promote the extension childcare project, the nighttime nursing project, and the childcare businesses for children with diseases and convalescent children. Along with the enforcement of the “Child and childrearing support system” (hereinafter referred to as “new system”), extended-hours childcare and sick child day care were positioned as “Regional child and childrearing support project”. Also, regarding family day care services and employer-provided childcare services, those serviced became subject to the regional-type child care benefits as local governments’ approved projects (Regional-type daycare projects), and as for night child care, facilities are covered the activities by other benefits or grants.

• Extension childcare
To meet the demand for extension childcare due to parent’s various working styles, some nursing centers are operated more than ordinary 11 hours. Out of such centers, private nursing centers are provided with necessary subsidies.
(In FY 2016, extension childcare was carried at 25,087 nursing centers [7,383 public centers and 17,704 private centers].)

• Nighttime nursing
Necessary subsidies are provided for nighttime nursing centers which open until around 10:00 p.m.
(In FY 2017, nighttime nursing was carried out at 81 nursing centers.)

• Childcare for children with disease
There are cases where childcare cannot be provided at home when a child falls sick or a child is convalescent in the case in which parents work. In order to respond to such childcare demand, the government provides the sick-child care services whereby sick children are provided with care temporarily at hospitals and childcare centers, and children who fall sick during childcare are provided with emergency measures including the visit to sick children for temporary custody with a view to developing environment where children are raised safely and improving welfare of children. (The number of implemented places in FY 2015 were 2,226.)
In addition, as from FY 2016, 1) in order to reduce the initial cost for starting the services, we subsidize expenses for facility development required for newly implementing sick-child care services in addition to conventional operating costs are subsidized, and 2) expenses to employ nurses in sick-child care centers and to transfer children who fall ill during childcare to hospitals and temporarily provide custody from the financial resources obtained by raising the business operator’s contribution.
In addition, in 2018 we reviewed the mechanism of subsidization for operating expenses to lead stability of the project.

• Municipal-level childcare services
In order to respond to the increase demand for childcare, we positioned 4 projects including “Small-sized childcare service” which nurses 6-19 children; “family day care service” which nurses less than 5 children; employer-provided child care service “which nurses children in the community in addition to employees’ children, within the Child welfare law” (Act No. 164 of 1952) as local governments’ approved projects. The municipal government was established as an approved project of municipalities, in accordance with enforcement of the new system, (As of April 1, 2016: 3,719 cases, including 2,429 cases of small-sized childcare services, 958 cases of home-based childcare services, 323 cases of employer-provided childcare services, and 9 cases of home visit type childcare services.) (Fig. 2-1-3)
• **Employer-provided childcare**

The employer-provided childcare services newly established in FY 2015 are services subject to approval of municipalities (community-led childcare services) and are subject to regional-type childcare benefits.

(As of April 1, 2016: 323 cases)

In addition, in order to expand childcare services to respond to a diversity of work styles, the company-led childcare were implemented in the work-childcare balance support services newly established through the revision of the Act on “Child and Child Care Support Act” (Act No. 65 of 2014), and a part of expenses for the development and operation of employer-provided childcare facilities installed by companies is subsidized since FY 2016. In this project Since the installation site of facilities is not limited to within the premises of the companies, the services are provided with originality and ingenuity using facilities provided jointly by small to medium sized companies as well as facilities installed around stations in consideration of convenience of employees and children using them to meet the needs of employees and each company.

(Number of grants as of March 30, 2017: 871 facilities, for the capacity of 20,284 people)

In the work and childcare balance support program, in addition to the above, when workers with a variety of work styles use the babysitter dispatch service for work, a part of the cost is subsidized since FY 2016 as employer-provided babysitter support services.
Reduce Wait-listed Children

Current situation of wait-listed children
The Abe cabinet positioned the problem of the wait-listed children for nursery schools as a top priority and formulated the “Acceleration plan for elimination of wait-listed children” in April 2013. The plan set the goal of arranging childcare for additional 500,000 children in the five years from FY 2013 to the end of FY 2017. In the four years from FY 2013 to the end of FY 2016, we achieved to expand the number of childcare for a total of approximately 428,000 children, together with the employer-provided childcare services, and for the five years up to the end of FY 2017, it is expected that arranging childcare will be expanded to 593,000 children including 60,000 children ahead of the original schedule of “Plan to rear children with peace of mind.”

On the other hand, the employment rate of women between the ages of 25 and 44 has been increased year by year, and in accordance with this trend, the number of applicants to use of childcare service has been increasing year by year. For this reason, the number of wait-listed children for nursery schools has reached 26,081 as of April 2017 (an increase of 2,528 children compared with the previous year), and it is still at a level exceeding 20,000 children. (Fig. 2-1-4, Fig. 2-1-5, Fig. 2-1-6)

Source: MHLW
### Table 2-1-5  Municipalities with 200 or more of wait-listed children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Prefecture</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Number of wait-listed children as of April 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
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Source: MHLW

### Table 2-1-5  Number of Wait-listed Children by Age

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Children using the service</th>
<th>As of April 1, 2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Young children (age 0-2)</td>
<td>975,056</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zero-year-old-children</td>
<td>137,107</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-year old and 2 year-old children</td>
<td>837,949</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 year-old or older children</td>
<td>1,483,551</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of all children</td>
<td>2,458,607</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: MHLW
Plan to rear children with peace of mind and others
The employment rate of women from 25 years old to 44 years old will continue to rise and it is expected that the application rate of nursing care service will also increase in correlation with the employment rate in the future, thus we announced “Plan to rear children with peace of mind” in June 2017 and are planning to develop a new childcare facility for about 320,000 children which can cope with the female employment rate of 80% in the five years from FY 2018 to FY 2022. In the “New Economic Policy Package” decided by the Cabinet in December 2017, the schedule of this measure is accelerated to complete the arrangement by the end of FY 2020. (Fig. 2-1-7)

Fig. 2-1-7 Plan to rear children with peace of mind

# Elimination of wait-listed children
The government will secure the budget for childcare centers for about 220,000 children required to eliminate wait-listed children in two years between FY 2018 and the end of FY 2019 in order to support active local governments including Tokyo.

(A latest, the government is poised to eliminate wait-listed children across Japan in three years by FY 2020)

[The government aims to eliminate the “M-curve” in 5 years while maintaining zero wait-listed children.] In order to eliminate the “M-curve”, the government will prepare childcare facilities for about 320,000 children to respond to women’s employment rate of 80% in 5 years from FY 2018 to the end of FY 2022.

(Reference) Women’s employment rate in Sweden: 82.5% (2013)

Secure the budget for developing childcare centers to support local governments and eliminate wait-listed children in 2 years

(At latest, the government is poised to eliminate wait-listed children in three years)

Secure the budget for developing childcare centers to support local governments and eliminate wait-listed children in 2 years

End of FY 2017

Increase of 530,000 children

Increase of 583,000 children

“Acceleration Plan for Elimination of Wait-listed Children” (5 years)

Number of wait-listed children: About 26,000 (as of April 2017)

Women’s employment rate (25-44 years): 72.7% (2016)

End of FY 2019 – End of FY 2020

Increase of 320,000 children

60,000 children ahead

2 years ahead

End of FY 2022

“Plan to rear children with peace of mind” (2 to 3 years)

Zero

80%

2 years ahead

Source: MHLW
In this package, we will allocate an increased amount of employer contribution for the employer-provided childcare services and operating expenses for childcare services (corresponding to children aged 0 to 2 years old) which are necessary for realizing the plan, and in order to take necessary measures such as raising the maximum rate of the contributions, we submitted a “Draft of a bill to revise a part of the child and childrearing support law” to the ordinary Diet session of the year 2018 (196th Diet), which was passed in March of the same year.

Also, on the actual implementation of arranging childcare, it is important for local governments, the responsible organization for the services, to accurately grasp the childcare needs including the potential needs, and to reflect it in their development plan. For this reason, we informed local governments in December 2017 that when they prepare a development plan based on the “Plan to rear children with peace of mind” they should proactively try to grasp potential needs through utilizing “Childcare Concierge” and so on. In addition to the above countermeasures, UR Rental Housing, in cooperation with local governments, has been trying to provides childcare support facilities (such as nursery schools, kindergartens, school childcare, etc.) through utilization of development sites which are generated by housing complex regeneration projects as well as existing vacant stores, and the like. As of the end of FY 2008, it accomplished 609 cases. In addition, due to the amendment of the “Urban Park Act” (Act No. 79 of 1951) in 2017, Special measures for occupancy in urban parks related to the setting up of nursery schools and the like, that have been limitedly accepted only in the National Strategy Special Zone, have become a generalized measure. By this, it is expected that the childcare arrangements will be expanded.

Promotion of “human resources securing measures”

The government is poised to implement comprehensive measures in a continued manner, including improving treatment, securing new childcare qualifiers, supporting continued employment, and supporting reemployment of unemployed persons in order to secure childcare personnel who will be responsible for nursery care in conjunction with the expansion of childcare centers. (Fig. 2-1-8)

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**Fig. 2-1-8**

**Comprehensive measures toward securing childcare personnel**

- **Support for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person**
  - Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Support for tuition fees for those who are aiming to acquire qualifications through graduation of training schools while working in nursery schools etc.)
  - Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification by passing the nursery teacher examination)
  - Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Support for teaching materials etc. to those who are aiming to acquire qualification by passing the nursery teacher examination))

- **Support for continued employment**
  - Relocation of requirements for training and expansion of the range of childcare personnel (Required to attend childrearing support staff training → Practice at nursery school etc. acceptable) (Budget in FY 2018)
  - Increase subsidy base amount (1 person/facility (2.215 million yen) → facility with capacity of 121 or more: 2 persons (4.43 million yen)) (Budget in FY 2018)
  - Expansion of childcare system enhancing project (Support for wages of those who do business such as cleaning)

- **Housing support for childcare persons**
  - Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Support for teaching materials etc. to those who are aiming to acquire qualification by passing the nursery teacher examination)
  - Expansion of support project for persons to acquire newly the qualification of childcare person (Support for teaching materials etc. to those who are aiming to acquire qualification by passing the nursery teacher examination)

**Source:** MHLW

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Especially, the government improves treatment for childcare persons every year and the treatment of all personnel will be improved by 2% in the FY 2017 budget. Specifically, the government is conducting improvement of working conditions for staff, the wages raised for mid-career staff who have more than seven years of experience was 40,000 yen per month, and for staffs with experience years longer than three years was 5,000 yen per month. In addition, the “New Economic Policy Package” decided by the Cabinet on December 8, 2017, included further treatment improvement of 1% from 2019. In the second supplementary budget for FY 2016, the government did not only expand and improve the loan for employing childcare assistants for relieving work burden of childcare persons, but also expanded and improved the loan for mobilization fee for reemployment support of unemployed persons, in addition to the establishment of loan for fees for the use of childcare support service by childcare persons with preschool children, as a support of their continued employment. Also, in the initial budget for FY 2017, we explained our intention to expand the number of people who are subject to “Childcare teachers lodging support projects” and create a “Nursing career employment support project” that supports efforts to secure human resources in local governments, including internships for students to further work on securing more human resources. In addition, as a comprehensive measure for securing nursing personnel, we implemented support for ICT conversion in nursery schools etc. to reduce the workload of nursery teachers in the FY 2017 supplementary budget. In the initial budget for FY 2018, we expanded the target of childcare qualification acquisition projects, we also expanded the period covered by qualification acquisition support projects by nursery teacher examination along with expansion and improvement of the employment support for childcare assistants and strengthen daycare system. We are going to take further steps for having measures to secure further human resources, such as exemption of basic welfare-related examination subjects for welfare-related national qualification owners (care workers, social workers, and physiological social workers), as they already acquired the knowledge on these subjects in the training course of each qualification when such people takes nursery teacher examination, among others.

Breaking “the barrier of elementary-school first-grade children”

Promotion of Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children
In order to break down the so-called “the barrier of elementary-school first grade children” of dual-income households and foster human resources who are to bear the destiny the next generation, and so as to allow all school-aged children to safely spend their time after school, and have various experiences and perform activities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) published jointly on July 31, 2014 the “Comprehensive After-school Plan for Children” with the aim to thoroughly make use of school facilities (spare classrooms and classrooms not in use temporarily) to promote initiatives centered on After-school Classes for Children and After-School Children’s Clubs. According to the plan, the capacity of the After-school Children’s Clubs will be newly increased by about 300,000 by the end of FY 2019 to secure the capacity for about 1.22 million children. The Ministries aim to implement both After-School Children’s Clubs and After-school Classes for Children in an integrated and collaborated manner in all elementary school districts (about 20,000 districts) and to implement them in more than 10,000 districts in an integrated manner. (Fig. 2-1-9) In keeping with the “New Economic Policy Package” (Decided by the Cabinet on December 8, 2017), we will continue to secure new childcare arranging for about 300,000 children based on the “Comprehensive After-school Plan for Children” by the end of FY 2018, move forward from its original schedule that to be done by the end of FY 2019. In addition, raising the national treasury subsidies for developing and maintenance costs of After-school Children’s Clubs is implemented. Furthermore, when an After-School Children’s Club or an After-school Class for Children will be newly developed, school facilities should be thoroughly utilized. We are aiming that approximately 80% of the newly launched After-School Children’s Club to be carried out in elementary schools. The “After-School Classes for Children” that provides all children with opportunities for learning, sports, cultural and artistic activities, and exchange activities with local residents with their participation is implemented in 17,615 places of 1,098 municipalities as of September 2017.
The “After-school Children’s Clubs,” which provides places to live and play for school children whose parent/s are absent during daytime due to work, has been operated at 24,573 places in 1,619 municipalities, by using school’s spare classrooms or Children’s House, and 1,171,162 children are registered. (Fig. 2-1-10)

**Fig. 2-1-9** Overview of Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children

**Table 2-1-10** Implementation status of After-school Children’s Clubs and After-school Classes for Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>After-school Children’s Clubs (As of May 2017)</th>
<th>After-school Classes for Children (As of September 2017)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of places with implementation</td>
<td>24,573 places</td>
<td>17,615 places</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of municipalities with implementation</td>
<td>1,619 municipalities</td>
<td>1,098 municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of registered children</td>
<td>1,171,162 children</td>
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Source: MEXTand MHLW
Enhancement of After-school Children’s Clubs

Regarding “After-school Children’s Clubs,” based on the “Child Welfare Act” (Act No. 164 of 1947) revised in 2016, the age of the child who receive the service has changed from “a child under 10 years old” to “a student who is enrolled in elementary school” from April 2015. At the same time, from the viewpoint of ensuring quality, we formulated “Criteria on equipment and operation of after-school child sound upbringing services” (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Ordinance No. 63 issued in 2014) which stipulated the staff qualifications, number of accepting children and facilities and so on. Based on this, local governments should establish the standards concerning facilities and operation by ordinance and implement “After-school child sound upbringing services” in accordance with the ordinance.

In addition, while taking into consideration the diversified operation of the After-school Children’s Clubs, the “Guidelines to operate the After-school Children’s Clubs” (March 2015) was formulated with the aim to clarify the standards of play and living environment to be guaranteed to children in group in the After-school Children’s Clubs as well as the operational details, and to secure stability and continuity of the program with a view to securing and improving a certain level of quality as a life place where children can spend their time with peace of mind.

In addition, in the initial budget for FY 2016, in order to achieve the goal of “Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children,” we raised the subsidy rate of facility expenses, and raised the subsidy for projects to renovate existing facilities, improve and repair equipment and purchase supplies when establish an After-school Children’s Club. Also, in an effort to eliminate the wait-listed children for nursery school, we conducted quantitative expansion of After-school Children’s Clubs, including assistance for expenses for land rent and relocation of After-school Children’s Clubs.

Promotion of the After-school Classes for Children

MEXT promotes the “After-school Classes for Children” to provide children after school with opportunities for learning as well as various experiences and exchanges with the cooperation of parents and local people from FY 2007. Based on the revision of the “Social Education Act” (Act No. 207 of 1949) in March 2017, we have been promoting Community Cooperation Activities for Learning and Education or which entire community supports the growth of children who bear the future and to create regional revitalization throughout Japan. And in order to foster the healthy growth of children in the regions, we are trying to enrich learning and experiencing programs for After-school Classes for Children. Furthermore, in the initial budget for FY 2017, aimed at achieving the goal of “Comprehensive After-School Plan for Children,” we promoted systematic development for improvement of After-school Classes for Children integrated or cooperative with After-school Children’s Clubs and program improvement.
Development of environment in which hope for marriage and childbirth can be realized

1 Stable economic basis

(Stable employment of young people)

Promotion of measures against non-regular employment

There has been a trend towards increasing number of non-regular employees in recent years. There were 20,360,000 non-regular employees by 2017 and their proportion to all employees excluding executives exceeds 1/3. Problems of non-regular employees as compared to regular employees include: <1> unstable employment, <2> low wages and <3> little opportunity for skills development. It is important to seize appropriate opportunities where employment situations are improving step by step, and promote improvement in the treatment of those who are switching to a regular employee and those who choose to work non-regularly. For this reason, having Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare as its director-general, “Regular Employee Conversion/Treatment Improvement Office” established the “Regular Employee Conversion/Treatment Improvement Plan” in January 2016. Offices were also set in each Prefectural Labour Bureau and the “Regional Plan” for each prefecture was devised by March of the same year. Based on these plans, the government is strongly promoting the conversion of non-regular employees into regular employees and improvement in the treatment of non-regular employees.

Along with the conversion of non-regular employees into regular employees, the government is also promoting organization of an environment where workers can live with peace of mind, regardless of regular/non-regular. The government is taking necessary measures indicated below for each non-regular employment form such as dispatched labor, fixed-term labor and part-time labor.

For dispatched workers, the government has been working to raise awareness by holding seminars and creating a pamphlet explaining the details of the “Act for Partial Amendment to Act on the Security of the Proper Operation of Worker Dispatching Undertakings, Protection of Dispatched Workers, etc.” (Act No. 73 of 2015) which was put into effect in September, 2015 and distributing it to each Prefectural Labour Bureau, and holding seminars.

For fixed-term workers, the government carried out the “Campaign for the Promotion of Activities for Converting Fixed-Term Labor into Unlimited-Term Labor” in September and October 2017 in order for the “Unlimited-Term Labor Conversion Rule” (a system for converting fixed-term workers into workers with no fixed term through submission of an application if a fixed-term contract has been renewed for a total of more than 5 years) based on the “Act for Partial Amendment to Labor Contracts Act” (Act No. 56 of 2012) fully put into effect in April 2013 to be implemented smoothly. The government has also made efforts in the awareness-raising, enlightenment and implementation support of the unlimited-term labor conversion rule through various opportunities including organization of seminars in all 47 prefectures of Japan and distribution of handbooks compiling successful examples of corporations who have pioneered the implementation, operation of a portal site summarizing support measures and procedures for the implementation of the rule.

For part-time workers, the government has been working to ensure treatment of workers of various employment forms that is balanced and fair with that of regular workers and providing administrative guidance as well as expert assistance/consultation to business operators based on the “Act Respecting the Improvement of Employment Management of Part-time Workers” (Act No. 76 of 1993, hereinafter referred to as the “Part-Time Labor Act”) which promotes conversion of part-time workers into regular workers.

In September 2016, the “Council for the Realization of Work Style Reform” was held and in December of the same year, the “Draft of the Guideline on Equal Pay for Equal Work” indicating example situations where the gap between regular workers and non-regular workers is going to be considered irrational. “The Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform” established in March 2017 aims at eliminating the irrational gaps between regular workers and non-regular workers. It also directs that existing laws regulating the evidence of the gap must be amended. An inquiry has been submitted to the Labour Policy Council in September of the same year on the “Act on the Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform” in order to ensure fair working conditions regardless of employment status based on the Action Plan and a report has been returned. Given the reply, a bill on the amendment of the
Part-Time Labor Act, Labor Contracts Act and “Act for Securing the Proper Operation of Worker Dispatching Undertakings and Improved Working Conditions for Dispatched Workers” (Act No. 88 of 1985) has been submitted to the Diet in April 2018.

(Promotion of economic support for young generation by older generation)
System of gift tax exemption in relation to package donation as marriage and childrearing funds as well as education funds
In light of the fact that financial anxieties in the future are among the major factors that discourage young people from marriage and childbirth, a system to exempt gift taxes has been enforced from April 2015 (applicable to March 31, 2019). This system is available when grandparents or parents make a package donation to children and grandchildren as marriage and childrearing funds through early transfer of their assets with a view to supporting their marriage, childbirth and childrearing. The items subject to tax exemption under the system were clarified in the tax system revision of FY 2016.
To promote the transfer of financial assets between the generations and to support the childrearing generation, a system to exempt gift taxes for package donation given by grandparents to grandchildren as an educational fund to support the childrearing generation, has been enforced from April 2013 (applicable to March 31, 2019). In the tax system revision of FY 2017, it was decided that receipts can be submitted also by way of electromagnetic records in addition to written forms.

Support for marriage
(Government’s support for local governments and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry which provide marriage support)
Development of momentum all around Japan
The government held the “National Council for Supporting Marriage —New cooperation for fulfilling as many wishes as possible—” (January 2018) for representatives who are working to support marriage in local governments and marriage support staffs who are providing opportunities for single men and women looking for a partner to meet new people, in order to share information and create a positive atmosphere. Events at the council included a keynote lecture entitled “the changing of Japanese marriage” on why marriage rate has declined in Japan, an introduction of marriage support initiatives promoted together by local governments/corporations/marriage support centers, and a panel discussion on the effective marriage support by experts and practitioners.
Moreover, various forums etc. hosted by each local government were held for the purpose of creating a positive atmosphere for marriage support in local areas, and there were a total of 18 forums and events for marriage support in FY 2017. (Fig. 2-1-11)
List of the holding of “Forum on Marriage Support”

Forum on Marriage Support held nationwide in FY 2017

[Fukushima] [Ibaraki] [Gunma] [Tokyo]
[Kanagawa] [Toyama] [Aichi] [Kyoto]
[Shimane and Tottori] [Okayama] [Hiroshima]
[Kagawa] [Tokushima]
[Saga] [Kumamoto] [Kagoshima] [Okinawa]

Source: Cabinet Office
### The list of Forum on Marriage Support held nationwide in FY 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 30 (Sun.)</td>
<td>Tokushima (Marissa Tokushima 1st Anniversary Marriage Support Festa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17 (Sun.)</td>
<td>Fukushima (Fukushima Marriage Support Forum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 7 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Kyoto (Kyoto Prefectural Marriage and Matchmaking Support Center 2nd Anniversary Forum in Kyoto)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Kagawa (Kagawa Matchmaking Support Center 1st Anniversary Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 28 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Hiroshima (Marrige Support Seminar in Hiroshima)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12 (Sun.)</td>
<td>Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa and Yamaguchi (LIFE DESIGN Mission Mirai College Kyusyu and Yamaguchi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16 (Thu.)</td>
<td>Okinawa (Okinawa Meeting Support Symposium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19 (Sun.)</td>
<td>Ibaraki (Ibaraki Marriage and Childrearing Wakuwaku Festa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Toyama (Toyama Happy Marriage Festa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21 (Sun.)</td>
<td>Saga (Saga Mirai Design Fiesta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2 (Fri.)</td>
<td>Aichi (Marriage Support Forum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8 (Thu.)</td>
<td>Gunma (Gunma Marriage Support Fair 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Shimane and Tottori (Iikoi Shirousagi Forum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Okayama (Okayama Matchmaking Forum 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20 (Tue.)</td>
<td>Tokyo (Let's talk about marriage with Governor Koike at Tokyo Forum!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Kanagawa (Koikana! Fair 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26 (Mon.)</td>
<td>Kumamoto (Kumamoto Marriage Support Forum What companies can do for employees who wish to get married.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3 (Sat.)</td>
<td>Kagoshima (Marriage Hunting Support Seminar &amp; Forum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 18

Source: Cabinet Office
Utilization of “Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas”

The “Subsidy for Tackling Declining Birthrate in Local Areas” established with supplementary budget in FY 2013 (the name has been changed to the “Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas” from supplementary budget in FY 2015) is supporting marriage activities run by local governments through construction/sophistication of the matching system in marriage support centers and organization of forums for supporting marriage.

In FY 2017, the government has supported comprehensive marriage support activities in local areas as well as activities promoting marriage run by multiple cooperative local governments, in order to promote “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (Decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016). The government also supported activities run voluntarily by corporations/organizations/schools working in cooperation with local governments, providing opportunities for various exchanges which contribute to the promotion of work-life balance etc.

Utilization of “Subsidies for Supporting Marriage and New Lives”

“The Subsidies for Supporting Marriage and New Lives” established with the supplementary budget of FY 2015 supports local governments that support new married households with an income below a certain level with expenses required for starting their new married life (home rent, expenses for moving into a new house, etc.) (The government supported a total of 234 local governments in 2017.) From supplementary budget in FY 2017, they are handled as the menu (Projects for marriage and new lives) of the “Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas” (Fig. 2-1-12).

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### Fig. 2-1-12

**Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas (Subsidies for Supporting Marriage and New Lives)**

**Background**

In order to achieve the “desired birthrate 1.8”, it is important to develop an environment to enable young people who want to get married will be able to do so at a desired age, and in “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (Decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016), it is stipulated that a progressive approach including new life support after marriage should be taken.

### Reasons why new married households need to be supported

- **People cannot take on marriage mainly for economic reasons**
  - Percentage replying that the obstacle to marriage is the “money for getting married”
    - Unmarried men (18 to 34 years): 43.3%
    - Unmarried women (18 to 34 years): 42.9%
  - Percentage replying that the obstacle to marriage is the “house for getting married”
    - Unmarried men (18 to 34 years): 31.2%
    - Unmarried women (18 to 34 years): 15.3%

### Initiative which need to be taken by the administration for people wishing to get married

- **Provision of places and opportunities for encounter**
- **Provision of loans and subsidies for marriage and housing**
- **Securing of free time through correction of long working hours**
- **Stable provision of employment opportunities**
- **Taxation and social security which are favorable for married people**
- **Securing of free time through correction of long working hours**
- **Stable provision of employment opportunities**
- **Securing of free time through correction of long working hours**

### Overview of the Program

- Eligible households: Households with couples who have newly married, whose household income is less than 3.4 million yen and whose ages were 34 years or younger on the day of marriage.
- Eligible items: Expenses for home acquisition or home rent for marriage, house-moving expenses.
- Subsidy rate: 1/2
- Upper limit of subsidy: 300,000 yen per household (150,000 yen will be supported by the government)

### Flow of the program

1. Application
2. City, town, and village
3. Program plan
4. Prefectures
5. Cabinet office

*Eligible households, applicable items and the maximum amount of subsidy available can be increased or decreased depending on each area’s actual situation. However, the increased portion will not be covered by this subsidy.

*Provision of marriage money (cash) or cash voucher, and the lowering of rent of regional quality housing subject to governmental subsidy are excluded.

Source: Cabinet Office
Promotion of Work Style Reform of Men and Women

1 Reforming men’s consciousness and behavior

(Correction of long working hours)

Restriction of long working hours and promotion of use of annual leave

As a measure for tackling long working hours, it is important to not only endeavor to decrease the number of working hours but also take workers’ health and lives into consideration and improve current working conditions by adapting them to various work styles with respect to terms concerning working hours, number of holidays and annual leave season. There are also many problems pertaining to this topic in recent years, such as rapidly increasing ratio of employers who are working more than 60 hours a week, growing number of cases recognized as an industrial accident concerning death from overwork (increasing in increments of 700), rate of annual leave usage remaining at a level below 50%, and necessity of further consideration for the diversification of issues faced by workers including childcare, nursing of the aged and self-enlightenment. Based on these issues, the government is appealing to corporations with the goal of reviewing work styles including reduction of working hours and promotion of use of annual leave, under the “Office for Promoting Reduction in Long Working Hours” established within the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in September 2014. Prefectural Labour Bureaus have also set up the “Office for Promoting Work Style Reform” and are working to appeal to business owners and to create a positive atmosphere toward work style review in local areas.

Moreover, the government is also promoting balance between work and life by encouraging voluntary activities of labor and management toward improvement in the setting of work hours based on the “Work Hour Review Guideline (Guideline for improving the setting of work hours).”

In addition, “The Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform” was put into shape in the 10th meeting of the Council for the Realization of Work Style Reform held in March 2017. In this plan, correction of long working hours is considered as one of the solutions to an issue that “working long hours has made it difficult to balance between work and family life and has become a factor in worsening declining birthrate, obstructing women’s career development and preventing men from participating in family life.” The plan then directs that the “Labor Standards Act” (Act No. 49 of 1947) must be amended and that overtime work requires an upper limit with penalties. The “Bill on the Organization of Laws for the Promotion of Work Style Reform” giving an outline of “Review of the Flex-time System,” “Full Use of the Fixed Number of Annual Leave Days,” etc. besides the upper limitation of overtime work, which meets the needs of workers with issues including childcare was submitted to the Diet in April 2018.

(Promotion of men taking childcare leave immediately after their spouse giving birth)

Encouraging men to take Childcare Leave

It is necessary to promote work-life balance for both men and women. It is further required to encourage men to participate actively in childcare while they realize the joy of childcare and being aware of their responsibility for it. Currently, the fact that men are not sufficiently involved in childcare and housework makes it difficult for women to continue working and contributes to the declining birthrate.

Accordingly, in order to promote male workers’ use of childcare leave, the “Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members” (Act No. 76 of 1991, hereinafter referred to as the “Family Care Leave Act”) was amended in 2009 to enable <1> a system which allows extension of the length of the permitted childcare leave if both father and mother are going to take a childcare leave at the same time “Father & Mother Childcare Leave Plus,” <2> a system which encourages fathers to use childcare leave within eight weeks after birth of their child, and <3> a system which allows workers to take a childcare leave even if their spouse is a househusband or on a childcare leave. The amended law was put into effect in 2010.

However, while the government aims at increasing the rate of use of childcare leave for men to 13% by 2020 according to the “Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate” (decided by the Cabinet on March 20, 2015), it still remains at 3.16% (2016). Japanese men’s participation in (time spent on) childcare and
housework also remains at the lowest level among advanced countries.
In order to improve the organization of environments where both men and women can continue to work while taking care of children, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is taking measures to thoroughly implement and raise awareness of systems based on the Family Care Leave Act, working to create a workplace culture which encourages men to take a childcare leave, and supporting business owners who are taking initiatives in the promotion of use of childcare leave by men through “Work-Life Balance Support Subsidy: Work-Life Balance Course for Workers with Newborn Babies,” a system which provides subsidies if a business owner manages to get another worker to take a childcare leave. The Ministry has been examining the work-life balance support measures based on their needs in the “Comprehensive Study Group for Supporting Balance between Work and Childcare” since June 2017 and compiled a report in March 2018, given the decision “While women’s employment has been increasing in Japan, burdens of childcare or nursing care are still biased toward women. Also, even when men hope to take childcare leaves, they cannot actually do so for various reasons. Considering these situations, we will mobilize all the measures necessary to promote male participation in childcare and nursing care. From these viewpoints, we will enable workers to take childcare leaves more flexibly and for longer time as well as improve office atmospheres, which often make it harder for workers to take leaves. We will promptly start and conduct comprehensive revisions of our system of childcare leaves based on workers’ needs.” in “The Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform” (Approved by the Council for the Realization of Work Style Reform on March 28, 2017).

2 Work-life balance and women’s advancement in the workplace

(Improvement of environment toward work-life balance)
Well-established work-childcare balance for childcare leave and short work hours
Since it is particularly difficult for women to balance work and family during childcare and nursing, it is necessary to primarily promote measures for supporting work-home balance in order to allow workers to continue their work. For this reason, for the purpose of organizing environments where both men and women can continue to work while taking care of children, systems for childcare leave, short work hours and overtime work limitation have been established in the “Act on Childcare Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members” (Act No. 76 of 1991). The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is taking measures to thoroughly implement and raise awareness of the law and supporting organization of working environments where workers can take advantage of the work-life balance support systems of childcare/nursing care leave and short work hour systems with peace of mind. With respect to this law, the revised law on the deregulation of the childcare leave usage conditions for fixed-term workers was put into effect on January 1, 2017. Additionally, another revised law which allows workers to extend the childcare leave until the child turns 2 years old if he or she is unable to enter a nursery school and make effort business owners to encourage workers who are eligible for the childcare leave system to take a childcare leave by informing them individually and installing holidays for childcare was enforced on October 1 of the same year. In addition to the work-life balance support systems of childcare/nursing care leave and short work hour systems, the Ministry is also making efforts to thoroughly implement and raise awareness of the amendment through various mediums including government publicity. Also, members of the Employees’ Health & Pension Insurance may be exempted from the obligation to pay for the Health Insurance and the Employee’s Pension during childcare leave with an application from the business owner.

Employment Environment/Equality Departments (Divisions) of Prefectural Labour Bureaus are providing administrative guidance for the purpose of ensuring the fulfillment of systems stipulated in the law by systematically visiting business locations to make sure that the required systems are established in employment regulations etc. In addition, with the aim to allow workers who took childcare leave to continue working, 67% and 50% of the wage before the start of the leave is paid as a childcare leave benefit between the start of the childcare leave and 180 days after the same and in the period thereafter, respectively.

(Promotion of Female participation and advancement)
Promotion of female participation and career advancement in the workplace
In order to prevent workers from being discriminated on the ground of gender and to develop an employment environment where working women are respected for their motherhood and can fully demonstrate their abilities, not only
that information and guidance are provided for ensuring equal treatment of men and women in line with the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (Act No. 113 of July 1, 1972), and when a dispute arises between the business operator and workers, support is provided to smoothly and quickly solve the issue, but also the diffusion of the “Guidelines for Supporting Efforts by Labor and Management Aimed at Reducing the Gender Pay Gap” is promoted to urge understanding of gaps between male workers and female workers and awareness of the actual circumstances within the company.

Government agencies, local governments and private-sector corporations with more than 300 employees are required by the “Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace” (Act No. 64 of 2015) fully put into force on April 1, 2016 to voluntarily grasp the women’s employment and appointment status; formulate and announce the action plans providing quantitative targets and initiatives, based on the understanding and analysis of the obtained data; and announce the data regarding Female participation and Career advancement (owners of small and medium-sized enterprises with less than 301 employees are required to make efforts in accordance with the terms).

In September 2016, the “website to visualize The Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace” which lists mainly the initiatives of both the government and local governments based on the same act was opened. Furthermore, “Regional Female Advancement Promotion Subsidies” supported actions of local governments that were implemented under their plans pertaining to the promotion of female advancement in the area based on the same act.

For private-sector corporations, with respect to the understanding of women’s participation status, task analysis and action plan establishment stipulated in the Women’s Participation Promotion Act, the government is implementing “Women’s Active Participation Promotion Projects for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises” with the purpose of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises’ activities based on the law. The government is also providing “Work-Life Balance Support Subsidy (Women’s Active Participation Acceleration Course)” for business owners who have achieved the goals stipulated in the action plan, and operating “Database of Companies Promoting Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Work Place” as a platform where corporations can share their information on their female employees’ active participation status and action plans. The smartphone version of the database was made available in December 2017 for improving students and female job seekers’ convenience.

In addition, the “Minister’s Prize for Equal Employment/Work and Family Harmonization” which recruits and awards those companies that promote positive actions (an active effort on a voluntary basis by companies to eliminate the gap that actually exists among workers between men and women) was implemented.

Furthermore, the reporting rate of large companies with more than 300 regular workers that are obliged to devise and disclose their action plan stands at 99.6 as of March 31, 2018. In addition, 579 companies were accredited with the certification mark “L Star=Eruboshi” as of March 31, 2018. In addition to ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the law by implementing advisory guidance and others so that efforts are made in line with the formulated action plans, and to disseminating and enlightening as many companies as possible on efforts towards the accreditation with the certification mark, MHLW will also provide support for the development of action plans to small and medium enterprises that are obliged to make effort to formulate and report their action plan. (Fig. 2-1-13)
“Eruboshi” Certification Based on the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace

<Grade 1>  <Grade 2>  <Grade 3>
- The highest grade fulfilling requirements in all the evaluation areas kindergartens and nurseries

Source: MHLW
Support for regional measures by taking advantage of their strength

Supporting Local Government
Along with marriage support, the “Subsidy for Tackling Declining Birthrate in Local Areas” established with a supplementary budget in FY 2013 (the name has been changed to the “Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas” from supplementary budget in FY 2015) is also supporting activities run by local governments for creating a child-friendly society and a positive atmosphere mainly around marriage, pregnancy/childbirth and infancy period including activities promoting men’s participation in housework and childcare, interaction workshops with babies and little children, childcare support passport projects, etc.

In FY 2017, the government has supported advanced activities regarding comprehensive marriage support and organization of systems and human resources development in local areas in order to promote “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (Decided by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016). The government also supported activities run voluntarily by corporations/organizations/schools working in cooperation with local governments, providing opportunities for various exchanges which contribute to the promotion of work-life balance etc.

For “Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Areas,” the Cabinet integrates desks for application etc. within the Office, and support activities for creating a child-friendly society and a positive atmosphere mainly around marriage, pregnancy/childbirth and infancy period through “Subsidy for Promotion of Countermeasures against Declining Birthrate in Local Area” and other advanced activities not eligible for the subsidy run by public-private partnerships, cooperation between local areas, joint policies, etc. through “Subsidy for Promoting Revitalization of Local Areas.”